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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (04/06): PALESTINIANS: PEACE
THROUGH THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION WITH JERUSALEM AS A SHARED CAPITAL

Main Stories:

Al-Quds leads with reports on the Israeli High Court's rejection of legal challenges to eviction orders of two East Jerusalem Palestinian families. All front pages note that the ruling comes despite the presentation of Ottoman era documents that prove the families' ownership of the land. Reporting adds that confrontations took place on April 5 between "settlers" and residents of another house under dispute in East Jerusalem, resulting in injury of three Palestinians and arrest of the owner and his two brothers. According to Palestinian Authority representative for Jerusalem Affairs Hatem Abdul Qadir, the ruling indicates that the Israeli High Court is not independent. Therefore, Palestinian authorities will file future petitions in international courts, he explained. The story follows two weeks of near-daily reporting on Jerusalem-area Palestinian house evictions and demolitions by the Jerusalem Municipality.

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida and Al-Ayyam lead with Palestinian Authority President(PA) Abbas' visit to Iraq on April 5. According to reports that also appear in Al-Quds' front page, Abbas met with Iraqi President Talibani to discuss bilateral relations, Palestinian national dialogue and the new Israeli Government. Abbas thanked Iraq for its support of the Palestinian cause and papers highlight that the visit is the first since 2003.

Al-Ayyam's front page reports on Netanyahu's upcoming travel to the U.S. to meet with President Obama on May 3. All dailies report that U.S. Special Envoy Mitchell will visit the region soon, now that the new Israeli government is in place. Al-Ayyam highlights that Mitchell announced that the Arab Peace Initiative will be part of Obama's Middle East policy and that the Administration is working on a strategy to pitch the Initiative to the Israeli public. In

related news, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida's front page cites an AFP report that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu announced that his government will begin work on defense and peace policies.

Al-Quds' front page reports that Palestinian Authority(PA)President Abbas will take steps to form a transitional government after unity talks failed to provide agreement on the composition and political platform of a new (PA) government. According to the report that cites London-based Al-Hayat daily, the transitional government will focus on Gaza reconstruction and preparations for presidential and legislative elections in January 2010. Abbas will attempt to secure the participation of Hamas and Islamic Jihad by including representatives of various factions in the new government, reporting concludes.

Al-Quds' and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida's front pages report on Israelis "stealing" one of the largest decorative stones of the Islamic Umayyad palaces located on the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem, during their ongoing excavations under the compound. According to reports quoting Islamic Waqf officials, the move is "very dangerous" and they call on Moslems and international institutions charged with protecting cultural patrimony to intervene and force the return the stone.

In economic news, Al-Quds front pages news about the European Commission's donation of \$31,500,000 to the Palestinian Authority (PA) Ministry of Finance to pay for salaries on April 16. Reporting notes that payment to Gaza employees will be delayed by, "restrictions on the transfer of funds," into Gaza. Meanwhile, all dailies report on inside pages that the Ramallah-based Housing Bank

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for Trade and Finance has opened a new branch in Turmus Ayyah village near Hebron. Speaking at the April 5 opening ceremony, Palestine Monetary Authority Governor Al-Wazir noted that the new branch will provide residents with better access to quality banking services. -----

WEEKEND STORIES:

Sunday, April 5, 2009

The front pages carried several stories about clashes between Palestinians and Israeli military. In Gaza, all papers highlight the killing of two Al Qassam Brigades members and a teenage girl, suspected of planning attacks on the Israeli border units. Separate reporting highlights clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian and international activists who entered agricultural land near the Israeli Karmitsur settlement in northern Hebron Governorate. A third front page story ran the weekly update of "scores of injuries" caused by tear gas, rubber bullets and "beatings with guns" by Israeli military.

"An Israeli court supports settler control over Palestinian land," according to a front page headline in Al Quds. The paper explained that in the landmark case, the Israeli military court ruled that settlers cannot be evacuated from Palestinian-owned land if the settlers can show that they have "used the land for agricultural purposes for a specific period of time." The paper further noted that the ruling means that the Israeli Army will not evacuate settlers even when the Israeli Army itself has issued the evacuation orders.

According to Al Ayyam's front page, the Jordanian Minister of Interior denied that his government has any contract with Hamas. The Minister explained that, "we do not interfere in Hamas' affairs and we do not allow Hamas to interfere in ours."

Saturday, April 4, 2009

Al Quds' and Al Ayyam's front pages highlighted the U.N. Human Rights Council's announcement of the appointment of Justice Richard Goldstone, Chief Prosecutor of the U.N. International Criminal Tribunals, to head an investigation into, "all violations of human rights committed during the last Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip." Reporting does note that violations by all groups will be investigated.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Ibrahim Kandalaft, opines in Al-Quds independent daily under the title, "Peace can be achieved through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State"(04/06): "As Palestinians, we should focus on the Palestinian cause and call on the international community and the Middle East Quartet to enforce international agreements and end the Israeli occupation in addition to announcing the establishment of an independent, Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital... the Middle East Quartet through the Road Map, focuses on the establishment of two states without, specifying clear borders or even a capital. Therefore, we should abide by King Abdullah of Jordan's statements that peace cannot be achieved between Palestinians and Israelis unless a Palestinian state is established with Jerusalem as its capital."

2) Ghassan Zaqtan runs an editorial in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the title, "The Palestine Liberation Organization"(04/06): "It is not clear how unity talk participants are handling the PLO question. What are they waiting for, before they take action to

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revitalize the PLO and pump new blood into its veins? PLO reform has always been a political demand on the Palestinian political scene. It did not first emerge after the recent conflict between Hamas and Fatah... PLO reform should not be understood as a response to Hamas'demands. Rather, the PLO needs to become a strong and viable organization that is capable of change through the introduction of a new, modern vision so that it can respond to external changes at national, regional and international levels."

WALLES